

address inequality in schools. But today I urge my colleagues to vote to pass the Every Child Achieves Act that will give all students the chance to learn and grow and thrive. Let's fix No Child Left Behind. Let's prove that Congress can break through gridlock and work together. Let's pass this bill for students, parents, teachers, and communities across the country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for an extra minute if I need it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, Senator MURRAY suggested we work on this in a bipartisan way. I took her advice. It was good advice. This is the result. We have had 100 amendments in committee and on the floor. We have had excellent process. I thank the majority leader. I thank Senator REID, the Democratic leader, for creating an environment to do that.

Now, let me say this about the vote we are about to have. This is a law that everybody wants fixed. We have a consensus on that. We have a consensus on how to fix it: keep the important measurements of academic achievement and turn the rest of it over to the States, to classroom teachers, and others who are closest to the children. That is what the Governors, that is what the superintendents, that is what the teachers organizations have said to us. They want us to fix it. They support the way we are proposing to fix it.

Now, in the last few years, we have created in this country, in effect, a national school board. It has made it harder to have better teaching, harder to set higher standards, harder to have real accountability in the States. So we changed that. We reversed the trend toward the national school board. We end the common core mandate. We end the waivers that the U.S. Department of Education is using to run public schools. We end DC evaluating teachers. We end adequate yearly progress.

Some are saying vote no because you should go further. Well, we had a chance to go further. We voted for the Daines amendment, the Scott amendment, and the Alexander amendment. That would have gotten us 90 percent of what we wanted. We got about 45 votes, so we didn't get anything. This gets us about 80 percent of what we want. A President named Reagan used to say: If you got 80 percent of what you wanted, you might take it and fight for the rest on another day. I am recommending we follow this advice.

If we vote no today, that means we leave the Common Core mandate right where it is. That means the waivers are still running your schools. That means adequate yearly progress is determined from Washington, DC, not in your hometown, and that means Washington, DC, is evaluating your teachers. Everybody wants this law fixed. If

you vote no, we fix nothing. We fix nothing. So no means we haven't fixed anything. So vote yes. Do what the Governors, do what the superintendents, do what the teachers say we ought to do. They all agree on that. This is the most important step in that direction we have had in 25 years. Let's not miss the opportunity. Vote to restore to the people closest to the children the responsibility for their education. Vote yes for local control of public schools.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall it pass?

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 81, nays 17, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 249 Leg.]

YEAS—81

Alexander	Feinstein	Merkley
Ayotte	Fischer	Mikulski
Baldwin	Franken	Murkowski
Barrasso	Gardner	Murray
Bennet	Gillibrand	Perdue
Blumenthal	Grassley	Peters
Boozman	Hatch	Portman
Boxer	Heinrich	Reed
Brown	Heitkamp	Reid
Burr	Heller	Roberts
Cantwell	Hirono	Rounds
Capito	Hoeven	Sanders
Cardin	Inhofe	Schatz
Carper	Isakson	Schumer
Casey	Johnson	Sessions
Cassidy	Kaine	Shaheen
Coats	King	Stabenow
Cochran	Kirk	Sullivan
Collins	Klobuchar	Tester
Cooms	Lankford	Thune
Corker	Leahy	Tillis
Cornyn	Manchin	Toomey
Cotton	Markey	Udall
Donnelly	McCain	Warner
Durbin	McCaskill	Whitehouse
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Menendez	Wyden

NAYS—17

Blunt	Lee	Sasse
Booker	Moran	Scott
Crapo	Murphy	Shelby
Cruz	Paul	Vitter
Daines	Risch	Warren
Flake	Rubio	

NOT VOTING—2

Graham	Nelson
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The bill (S. 1177), as amended, was passed.

(The bill, as amended, will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Washington and I be permitted to speak for as much time as we require.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EVERY CHILD ACHIEVES ACT

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, the vote was 81 to 17. What that says to me and should say to the American people is that not only is there a consensus in this country that everybody wants to fix No Child Left Behind, that is the consensus we began with. Not only was there consensus in the Senate's education committee about how to fix it—which was unanimous in a 22-member committee that includes Members who are about as diverse as you could find in the Senate—the entire Senate has a consensus on how to fix it.

The Senator from Washington and I were just talking. This is a complicated piece of legislation. There are crocodiles in every corner, any of which could have made it difficult for this bill to succeed. For the Senate to take a look at the 100,000 schools in this country for the 50 million children and the 3.5 million teachers and say, "We hear you. We know you want to end the confusion, the anxiety, and the feeling that you are not in charge of your own children. We hear you. We have listened to you, and we have come up with a solution with which you agree"—and that we voted by a vote of 81 to 17 is a remarkable event.

So we have a remarkable consensus that No Child Left Behind needed to be fixed. We had a remarkable consensus on how to fix it in the committee. There are not many times on a bill this difficult and this encompassing that we have a consensus this remarkable—81 to 17—in the Senate. I mentioned in my earlier remarks the importance of the Senate in this way.

Someone said the Senate is the one authentic piece of genius in the American political system. The only claim we would have to that exalted description would be that we are the only part of our government that is created for the express purpose of developing consensus. The House of Representatives is America's sounding board. The country moves suddenly, the House moves suddenly. Our job is to take all the different points of view and to consult with each other and to see whether we can create the kind of consensus so that when people look at the Senate and see a result, they may say: Well, I am not sure I agree with every single thing they did, but if 81 Senators of

both parties—out of 100—believe this is the right way to fix No Child Left Behind, I will accept it.

That is the way the civil rights bill was done in the 1960s and the 1970s. Large majorities—bipartisan groups—came to a complicated decision on a complex problem. The way you govern a complex country is by consensus, and the only agency in the government that is capable of creating that kind of consensus on a major piece of legislation is the United States Senate. It has done that today, and I am very proud of my colleagues for the way they have done this.

I especially thank the majority leader for creating the time to deal with it. We took a little more than a week. We came on the floor a week ago Tuesday, so we didn't really take that long. We got on and off the floor pretty quick. I also thank him for creating an environment where we could adopt a lot of amendments. Senators are here to have their say whether or not we agree. People of North Dakota expect that. People of Texas expect that. Senator MCCONNELL has created that environment.

Senator CORNYN, Senator THUNE, Senator BARRASSO, and the other leaders on the Republican side have been an enormous help.

I have during the week thanked the Democratic leader, Senator REID. Senator REID allowed this bill to come to the floor without delay. That helps a lot. During the week, he, Senator SCHUMER, Senator DURBIN, and the other members of the Democratic leadership, along with Senator MURRAY, created the environment where we could do what we have accomplished—especially Senator MURRAY. I have often said that the reason we are here is because she suggested to me a way to go forward, a way to do this together. She did that after both of us watched the last two Congresses where we just fell apart in the partisan differences. I took her advice—it was good advice—and that is why we are where we are today. I deeply respect the way she works toward a result. She is deeply passionate on the things she cares about, but she knows we are here to get a result, and that means in this case we need to work with the House of Representatives, which we will begin to do in the next few weeks. Then we will produce a bill and send it to the President in a form he is comfortable signing.

There are a number of Senators who, because we are able to offer amendments on the floor, withheld their amendment or stepped aside because what they were doing might have interfered with our result. I think of Senator FRANKEN on an amendment he feels powerfully about. He stepped aside and didn't offer it in committee but waited until the floor. Senator VITTER stepped aside on an amendment he felt strongly about because he could bring it up in the Judiciary Committee. Senator LEE, Senator TOOMEY,

and Senator BURR all did that. They showed some restraint in pursuit of a result.

I thank those outside this Senate whose work was so important to us. There are a lot of remarkable things about this consensus, but none was more remarkable than what those outside of the Congress thought. It is rare that you see the National Governors Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the American Association of School Administrators, the National Education Association, and the American Federation of Teachers all agree that not only did No Child Left Behind need to be fixed but that this was the way to fix it, and that made it easier to get a vote of 81 to 17.

Finally, all of us in the Senate know how important staff work is. In this case, staffs have worked for days and days, and the trust Senator MURRAY and I have developed is the same kind of trust they have developed. So I especially thank David Cleary, who is the staff director of the education committee, our HELP Committee, Peter Oppenheim, Lindsay Fryer, Lindsey Seidman, Liz Wolgemuth, Jim Jeffries, Margaret Atkinson, Bill Knudsen, Jordan Hynes, Steve Townsend, Hillary Knudson, Jake Baker, Kayla McMurray, Bobby McMillin, Matthew Stern, Diane Tran, Haley Hudler, Patrick Murray, and Allison Martin.

On Senator MURRAY's exceptional staff, I thank Evan Schatz, Sarah Bolton, Mike Spahn, Amanda Beaumont, John Righter, Jake Cornet, Leanne Hotek, Allie Kimmel, Aissa Canchola, Ariel Evans, Aurora Steinle, Leslie Clithero, Sarah Cupp, Eli Zupnik, and Helen Hare.

On the floor, I thank those who have the oil cans, Laura Dove and Robert Duncan, who keep this side greased and working, Gary Myrick on Senator REID's side, Chris Tuck, Mary Elizabeth Taylor, Megan Mercer, Tony Hanagan, Mike Smith, and Chloe Barz.

I would also like to thank the Senate Legislative Counsel's staff who worked long hours on the bill and then on the amendments, so I would like to especially thank Amy Gaynor, Kristin Romero, and Margaret Bomba.

We always rely on the experts at the Congressional Research Service to give us good information in a timely manner, so on behalf of the Committee I extend our thanks to Becky Skinner, Jeff Kuenzi, Jody Feder, and Gail McCallion.

On Senator MCCONNELL's staff, I would like to thank Sharon Soderstrom, Don Stewart, Jen Kuskowski, Katelyn Conner, Erica Suarez, John Abegg, Neil Chatterjee, and Johnathan Burks.

On Senator CORNYN's staff, I thank Russ Thomasson, Monica Popp, Emily Kirlin, John Chapuis, and Michele Chin.

I would also like to thank the following staff who played critical roles to help pass this important legislation. Dana Barbieri with the Republican Pol-

icy Committee: Meghan Taira and Veronica Duron with Senator SCHUMER; Dena Morris and Brad Middleton with Senator DURBIN; Natasha Hickman and Chris Toppings with Senator BURR; Josh Yurek with Senator ROBERTS; Tara Shaw and Kristin Chapman with Senator ENZI; Natalie Burkhalter with Senator PAUL; Bret Layson with Senator ISAKSON; Katie Neil and Bill Castle with Senator HATCH; Katie Brown with Senator COLLINS; Karen McCarthy with Senator MURKOWSKI; Cade Clurman with Senator KIRK; Lizzy Simmons, Will Holloway, and Daniel Bunn with Senator SCOTT; Pam Davidson and Chris Gillott with Senator CASSIDY; Josh Delaney and Julie Morgan with Senator WARREN; David Cohen with Senator SANDERS; Brenna Barber, and Chris Stavish with Senator WHITEHOUSE; Michael DiNapoli and Brian Moulton with Senator BALDWIN; Brent Palmer with Senator MIKULSKI; Jared Solomon and Joe Hill with Senator CASEY; Boris Granovskiy and Gohar Sedighi with Senator FRANKEN; Juliana Hermann with Senator BENNET; Russell Armstrong with Senator MURPHY; Aisha Woodward with Senator KING; David Cole with Senator MCCAIN; Sharon Burd with Senator FISCHER; Dana Richter with Senator CAPITO; Jordan Hess with the Republican Steering Committee; Christy Knese with Senator LEE; Devon Brenner and Constance Payne with Senator COCHRAN; Jennifer Bowman with Senator INHOFE; Crystal Martinez with Senator FEINSTEIN; Nancy Richardson and Viraj Mirani with Senator COATS; Desiree Mowry with Senator BLUNT; Moira Lenehan with Senator REED; Mary Blanche Hankey with Senator SESSIONS; Jessica-Phillips Tyson with Senator GRAHAM; Jane Lucas and Jon Abdnor with Senator THUNE; Travis Johnson and Kate LaBorde with Senator VITTER; Daniel Auger with Senator AYOTTE; Jennifer Humphrey and Toni-Marie Higgins with Senator BOOZMAN; Mike Thomas with Senator CARDIN; Robert Murray with Senator WICKER; Brian Perkins with Senator MORAN; Shawn Affolter with Senator HOEVEN; Emily Bouck with Senator RUBIO; Sean Riley with Senator JOHNSON; James Mikolowsky and Ethan Saxon with Senator BLUMENTHAL; Rachel Green with Senator HELLER; Will Holloway and Daniel Bunn with Senator SCOTT; Sarah Towles with Senator FLAKE; Jonathan Elkin with Senator HIRONO; Elizabeth Hill with Senator HEINRICH; Jeff Murray, Andrew White, and Courtney Asbill with Senator CRUZ; Clint Bowers with Senator HEITKAMP; Chris Slevin and Ashley Eden with Senator BOOKER; Curtis Swager and Alison Toal with Senator GARDNER; Katherine Mayne with Senator LANKFORD; John Martin with Senator COTTON; Dan Gerig with Senator DAINES; John Eustice with Senator PERDUE; Joe Nolan with Senator TILLIS; Peter Eckrich with Senator ROUNDS; Tony Frye with Senator ERNST; Alyene Senger and Andy Reuss

with Senator SASSE, and Kate Wolgemuth with Senator SULLIVAN.

I also thank members of the education community for their persistent help with this bill, including Mary Kusler with the National Education Association; Tor Cowan with the American Federation of Teachers; Chris Minnich, Peter Zamora Carissa Moffat Miller, and Jessah Walker with the Council of Chief State School Officers. There are many others who have helped, but this is a day I am very proud of the Senate. For 50 million children, 3½ million teachers, and 100,000 public schools, it is a big step forward.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the senior Senator from Tennessee, as he often does, has laid it out very well. I believe it is the case the U.S. Senate is the only legislative body in the world where a simple majority is not enough on almost everything.

This body was crafted in a way that would ensure, unless one side has a really big majority, that we work together, but it doesn't automatically work unless you have leaders like Senator ALEXANDER and Senator MURRAY who want to get a result.

So I want to commend both these outstanding Senators for an extraordinary accomplishment. This is a significant bill for the country, and to fold all of these disparate interest groups, with all their separate agendas, into a position of support was an extraordinary leadership contribution. So I say to both of you, both the Senator from Washington and the Senator from Tennessee, the Senate is proud of you for what you did here.

This is a good example for all the rest of us. On a little more contentious issue, Senator MURRAY and I had a chance to work together on trade promotion authority. We hope to do that on highways. We hope to do it on cyber security. The Senate is back to work. I think Members on both sides appreciate that, and we are going to continue to do this, but I thank both Senators for providing a wonderful example for all the rest of us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I recently heard from a teacher in Seattle by the name of Lyon Terry. Over the course of his 17-year career, he has taught second, third, and fourth grade. What makes Mr. Terry a great teacher is the way he engages with his students. He starts the morning by playing songs on his guitar. He keeps his students laughing with jokes, and every day he tries to create an environment where kids want to come to school.

Last year, he was named Washington State Teacher of the Year for 2015. This week, Mr. Terry has been following our debate on the Senate floor, and he was truly hoping we would pass this bill be-

cause he says the current law doesn't reflect the work he and his fellow teachers at Lawton Elementary School are doing every day.

So let me echo the words of the chairman of our committee and the majority leader. I am proud today that the Senate passed a bill to fix No Child Left Behind for teachers like Mr. Terry, for parents, for communities, and most importantly for our students—a bill to continue our mission of delivering on the promise of providing every child with the best our Nation can provide.

I have been very proud to partner with Chairman ALEXANDER on the Every Child Achieves Act, and I want to thank him tremendously for the successful bipartisan process we have had. I want to thank all our colleagues on the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions for their work and dedication in moving this bill forward. And, of course, I want to thank the staff as well—both my staff and the staff of Senator ALEXANDER—for all of their hard work. They have worked many, many, many long days and late nights and weekends to get us to this point today.

I will submit a full list of names later, but there are some staffers in particular I want to recognize. On Senator ALEXANDER's staff, I want to acknowledge and thank his staff director David Cleary, as well as Lindsey Seidman, Peter Oppenheim, and Lindsay Fryer. They have done an excellent job. On my staff, I want to acknowledge and thank my staff director Evan Shatz, and my education policy director Sarah Bolton for their outstanding leadership, as well as Amanda Beaumont, Leanne Hotek, Allie Kimmel, Aissa Canchola, Ariel Evans, Jake Cornett, Leslie Clithero, Aurora Steinle, Helen Hare, and Mary Robbins. Thank you for all of your hard work on this important bill.

I, too, want to thank our floor staff on our side, Gary Myrick, Tim Mitchell, Tricia Engle, and all our floor staff—Republican and Democratic—for their help and guidance. We couldn't be here without them.

I want to take a step back for a moment to look at the work we have done so far and the work that remains even beyond the vote we had today.

Of course, nearly everyone agrees No Child Left Behind is badly broken. That goes almost without saying. I have heard it from so many parents, teachers, and administrators in Washington State—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. They are sick and tired of the broken law in front of us. They want Congress to fix it, and they do not want us to wait any longer.

That is why I am so proud our bill, the Every Child Achieves Act, is a strong step in the right direction to finally fix the broken No Child Left Behind law and make sure all of our students have access to a high-quality public education.

For one, our bill addresses high-stakes testing. The current law over-

emphasizes test scores to measure how students are doing in school. Our bill will give flexibility to States to use multiple measures, not just test scores, to determine how well a school is performing. These steps will reduce the pressure on students, teachers, and parents so they can focus less on test prep and more on learning.

Our bill eliminates the one-size-fits-all provisions of No Child Left Behind that have been so damaging for our schools and our districts. Instead, it allows communities and parents and teachers to work together to improve their schools and ensure that every child gets a well-rounded education. Our bill maintains Federal protections to help students graduate from high school college- and career-ready.

When the education committee debated the bill, I was very proud to work on a bipartisan amendment with Senator ISAKSON to expand and improve on early learning programs. As a former preschool teacher, I have seen the kind of transformation early learning can inspire in a child. So I am very glad this bill will help us expand access to high-quality early childhood education so more kids can start kindergarten ready to learn.

I have also seen fixing the current law as a multistage process. At the beginning of this year, as the chairman said, he released his discussion draft for reauthorizing ESEA. After that, the two of us had a conversation about a path as to how to move forward. Instead of going down a partisan path and letting politics become our guide, we agreed to work together to find common ground. We agreed to do everything we could to put our students first, to put the families and communities we represent first, to break through the gridlock and dysfunction that too often paralyzes this Congress, and to chart a path to fix a broken law.

I again want to commend my partner Chairman ALEXANDER for sticking to that approach. He is a role model for all of us, and I appreciate all he is doing. The result is our Every Child Achieves Act. It wasn't the bill I would have written on my own, I know it isn't the bill he would have written on his own, but it is what is called a compromise. It is a strong bill that all sides can be proud of.

After we negotiated our bipartisan compromise in April, we passed our bill out of committee with a unanimous vote—12 Republicans, 10 Democrats. So I want to thank all of our Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee members who worked to improve and strengthen this bill in committee and all the Members—Democrats and Republicans on our committee and off—who wrote the dozens of amendments we included in our substitute and managers' packages, and all those who brought their ideas to the floor and debated and voted on them over the past week on the Senate floor.

Today, I am very proud we have passed this bill with a strong bipartisan vote. As we know, our work is not

yet done. Now we begin the next phase. As Chairman ALEXANDER has said throughout our floor debate, ultimately we need a bill President Obama will sign into law, and though this bill has taken a number of steps in the right direction, there are still a few more we need to do before our work is done. We have important work to do in conference to reach an agreement on a final bill.

The President has made it very clear to us he can only sign a bill that strengthens the accountability measures in the Every Child Achieves Act and that addresses inequality, where some schools are unable to offer the same opportunities as others. I agree that is a must, and I know I will continue to work hard, alongside ranking member BOBBY SCOTT in the House and the administration, to make accountability and resource equity a priority in conference.

The only way forward is for the strong bipartisan work we have seen in the Senate to continue in that process. Now, I will say, unfortunately, so far, House Republicans chose a partisan approach to reauthorize this bill. Their bill doesn't represent one end and ours represents another, where we have to meet in the middle. Their bill really represents an unacceptable partisan approach and path and ours represents a carefully negotiated compromise with just a few important steps to go.

So I hope in conference our friends in the House, the House Republicans, will be ready to join House and Senate Democrats, Senate Republicans, and the administration as we work together to get this done in a way that works for all our students and families.

By working together, I am confident we can get this bill over the finish line and fix this broken law for our teachers in my home State and across the country and help make sure all our students have a quality education. Delivering on that promise of a good education for all students will pay off for generations to come. This is one of the best investments in our country we can make to ensure we have broad-based and long-term economic growth because, as we all know, when students have the chance to learn, we strengthen our future workforce. We know our country grows stronger and we empower the next generation of Americans to lead the world. We will help our economy grow from the middle out, not just the top down, and that is something we have known for a long time.

Fifty years ago, in what would be just months before signing the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act into law, President Johnson said, when it comes to education, "nothing matters more for the future of our country." That is still true today. The future of our country hinges on our students' ability to one day lead the world.

So I am looking forward to our continued work on this Every Child Achieves Act for our students, for our

parents, for our teachers, and for the future of our country.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, it is my understanding we are in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, will the Senator from Indiana yield for 60 seconds?

Mr. COATS. I will be glad to yield.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I forgot to mention the number of amendments that were considered, and I would like to place that in the RECORD.

In the committee, we adopted 29 amendments. On the floor, 178 amendments were filed, 78 were considered, and 65 amendments were adopted—10 of those through rollcall votes, 28 through voice votes, and 27 by unanimous consent through two managers' packages.

Nearly 100 amendments were adopted to the bipartisan draft that Senator MURRAY and I presented to our education committee earlier this year. I think the fact so many Senators not only had a chance to have their say but had their ideas included in the bill—and I think especially of the Senator from Rhode Island who has worked for the last couple of years on a particular provision—was one important reason why we had a consensus that rose to 81 votes.

I thank the Senator from Indiana for his courtesy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I rise to speak but first want to acknowledge and thank my colleague Senator COLLINS for allowing me to step ahead of her in this process. I promise to be expeditious in terms of getting through this. It turns out her plane to Maine leaves later than my plane to Indiana, so she has very graciously allowed me to go forward.

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, the last 6 months of this Senate I have been coming down here every week to talk about the "Waste of the Week"—examples of waste, fraud, and abuse within the Federal Government. I can't believe this is No. 17. We are continuing to rack up significant savings to the taxpayer. We can eliminate these documented and certified wastes that have been determined through the various government agencies, inspectors general, and others.

Today we turn to a rather serious topic regarding the receipt of taxpayer dollars by criminals who are avoiding felony arrest but are still receiving benefits at taxpayers' expense.

Here is a little history. The Social Security Act currently prohibits those fleeing justice from receiving Social Security and other Federal benefits.

Congress first addressed this issue in 1996, when it banned fugitive felons from receiving Social Security benefits. It then expanded this prohibition in 2004 to also apply this ban to Social Security disability insurance and World War II benefits.

Unfortunately this law has run into some conflicting opinions by court challenges, which have weakened the effects of the law and led to a lack of clarity in terms of what the original language and original intent by Congress was supposed to be. To address this problem—because it is a problem, and there is lack of clarity—I have this week introduced legislation to amend the Social Security Act to clearly state—to clarify—the intent of the law that prohibits fugitive felons from receiving Social Security retirement and disability benefits. My bill would clarify this law and return the implementation of the policy to its original intent.

Now, let me be clear. The government should not be providing benefits to those avoiding prosecution, custody or confinement for a crime or attempt to commit a crime that is considered a felony. But we are not talking about individuals who get speeding tickets or make a mistake on their taxes. This legislation applies only to those with an arrest order for felony charges.

The crime must be of enough serious magnitude to carry with it a minimum sentence of 1 or more years in prison.

So we want to be careful here that we are not imposing this restriction of receipt of benefits on someone who doesn't qualify under the law, and that is another clarification that we want to make.

Furthermore, the bill retains the ability of the Social Security Administration to continue or restore benefits if the individual can show good cause—such as that they were exonerated of the crime or perhaps were victim of an identity theft or other legitimate reasons to not lose benefits.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, this commonsense fix could save taxpayers \$4.8 billion over the next 10 years alone.

So the bottom line is this: We pull out our chart with our ever-growing gauge of money that has been wasted through fraud and abuse within the Federal Government. We are climbing very quickly to \$100 billion. I thought it would take a year to get there if I did one a week. We are going to have to make a major extension to this chart or redo this because we are closing in on \$100 billion of wasted taxpayer money documented by Federal Government agencies in investigations. So passage of this bill would add \$4.8 billion to our chart.

We have come across so many instances of bloat, waste, fraud, and abuse. I could be down here every day the Senate is in session. I could be down here every hour the Senate is in session—such is the staggering amount of dysfunction occurring through this